

DIVERSITY VISA APPLICANTS MUST MEET ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 9 -- Each year, the State Department holds a lottery -- a computerized random drawing -- to select the names of persons who may apply for one of the 50,000 visas made available through the Diversity Immigrant Visa program. The lottery for the fiscal year 2009 program (DV-2009) is October 3-December 2, 2007.

Persons who register for the lottery should be aware that diversity visas are available only to persons who meet "simple but strict eligibility requirements," according to the State Department.

The selection of a person's name in the lottery does not automatically guarantee that a diversity visa will be issued. The lottery is just the first step in the visa application process.

Those selected in the lottery who go on to apply for a diversity visa must meet certain education or work experience requirements: either a high school education or its equivalent, or two years of qualifying work experience. The requirements are outlined in the DV-2009 instructions.

"If you cannot meet these requirements, you should NOT submit an entry to the DV program," according to the State Department's September 25 announcement concerning the visa lottery.

For the DV-2009 program, lottery registration entries will be accepted between noon Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (1600 GMT), Wednesday, October 3, 2007, and noon Eastern Standard Time (EST) (1700 GMT) Sunday, December 2, 2007. No entries will be accepted after that time, according to the DV-2009 instructions. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=September&x=20070926162644xlrennef0.2379724>).)

There is no fee for entering the Diversity Visa Lottery. However, there are mandatory fees connected with the visa application process itself, and those fees are paid at the time of visa application directly to the consular cashier at the embassy or consulate.

People are "strongly encouraged to enter early in the [lottery] registration period," the instructions note. "Excessive demand at end of the registration period may slow the [computer] system down. No entries whatsoever will be accepted after noon EST [1700 GMT] Sunday, December 2, 2007."

Applicants should complete the online lottery registration process very carefully. People often make careless mistakes that can disqualify them at a later date, even if they are selected in the initial lottery. They should read the instructions thoroughly before registering. Some common mistakes that people make include neglecting to list a spouse and all their children in their original entries, or choosing the wrong native country. These mistakes will disqualify the applicant at the time of a visa interview.

The Department of State Kentucky Consular Center in Williamsburg, Kentucky, will notify the people whose names are selected in the visa lottery that they are registered "for further consideration" in

the Diversity Visa Immigrant program for fiscal year 2009. Selected persons will be notified by mail (NOT e-mail) between May 2008 and July 2008.

Those selected in the lottery will receive instructions concerning the next steps in the process of applying for DV-2009 visas, which will be issued during fiscal year 2009 (between October 1, 2008, and September 30, 2009).

The visa instructions will include information on fees connected with the application for immigration to the United States. Payment of visa application fees does not guarantee that a diversity visa will be issued. Visa applicants are selected on the grounds of eligibility.

Any fees paid -- or costs incurred to prepare for the interview, such as for medical examinations -- are non-refundable.

Diversity visas are available only to persons from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. These countries are listed in the DV-2009 instructions.

The U.S. Embassy in Dhaka strongly advises all applicants to review all of their personal information on their on-line application for accuracy, especially their mailing address, before pressing the "submit" button.

Whether you fill out your own entry, you have a trusted friend or relative help you, or whether you have a paid professional assist you, you can safeguard against fraud by pressing the "submit" button yourself.

For more information, see DV-2009 Diversity Visa Lottery instructions (http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1318.html) and entry form (<http://www.dvlottery.state.gov/>), as well as a warning note (http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1749.html) on fake DV program sites.

For additional information on U.S. immigration policy, see Visas and Immigration (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.html).

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